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DEFENSE ISSUES

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The National Guard stands poised to play a significant part in the nation's defense against a potential biological or chemical weapons attack within its borders.

Volume 13 Number 19

Changing Role of the National Guard

Remarks by Deputy Secretary of Defense John J. Hamre to the Adjutant Generals Association of the United States, Washington, D.C., Feb. 3, 1998.

DR. HAMRE: Thank you.

... I am very grateful to be invited, and I am very glad to be here. This is the first time I've had a chance to come here to AGAUS (Adjutant Generals Association of the United States); this is really quite an impressive facility. I feel I'm coming to a friend's ...

You know, I had a chance to meet many of you the other night at [Lt.] Gen. [Edward D.] Baca's [chief, National Guard Bureau] home. I had a chance to meet many of you at the birthday celebration about two months ago. It was really a great experience, and I was just very gratified to be with you at the readiness center.

I, as is always the case, have people who have prepared a speech for me today. It was kind of your typical deputy secretary of defense speech to the National Guard -- you know, you guys are great; America loves you; we can't live without you. You've heard it a thousand times. I could give that speech. But frankly, it would seem so hollow and empty. It would be like those Hollywood movie sets, you know, you think you're in a town but you walk through a door and there's nothing there.

And it would be dishonest if I basically gave that speech that was prepared for me because there are an awful lot of pretty hard issues on the table. And I think it's just an awful lot better if we just talk about that. I would like to start and then maybe we could engage in a dialogue, because I think we're at an enormously important time. And it's a time that we can't afford to screw this up. I really do need to at least share with you my thinking on it and then ask you what your thoughts are and we can maybe talk a bit about this.

You know, the truth is that last year was a bad year. It was a bad year for the Guard. It was a bad year for the Army. And frankly, it was a bad year for America when that happens. And it's not good to have this kind of a fight in the family.

I don't know if you remember that movie a couple of years back called "War of the Roses." It was [about] a husband and wife named Rose and they were going to get a divorce and they got so into cutting up furniture and cutting up the house, they ultimately destroyed everything and killed themselves in the process. I've got to tell you, that's a little bit of what went through my mind last year. It was painful. It was genuinely painful to watch.

I talked to both sides. I know how demeaning you felt the off-site process was. Please, I'm not saying this to offend anybody, but I think that many of you felt like the Army was treating you like a retarded half-brother -- he doesn't really understand; we'll just tell him what he's going to do; we'll get through it. It was demeaning. I understand that.

And I understand from the Army's perspective. The Army, as with all of the services, but the Army is struggling hard with a lot of changes -- enormous changes and transition. You've got 8,000 people over

in Bosnia. Every year we start, we don't have any way to pay for it, you know. And then, right now, we're looking at an \$800 million shortfall in the Army's budget to get through this year to pay for Bosnia. It's killing them, you know.

And so their attitude was, they're in the QDR [Quadrennial Defense Review], they're trying to save force structure. I think their view is that if they don't save force structure, nobody else will. You understand that sentiment. And they were looking increasingly like the Guard was just kind of a drain on their resources. And it created, I think, a really ugly atmosphere. And it showed.

I have got to tell you, it was painful to watch, and we can't have that happen again. We just can't tolerate that. I honestly believe that the Army and the Guard cannot live without each other. The Guard really depends on the Army for the innovation, the new weapon systems, the new doctrine, leadership development, the whole kind of infrastructure that goes and makes combat a reality and a capability in this country.

By the same measure, the Army needs the Guard because the Army doesn't touch America, the Guard touches America. You went down, during Desert Storm, when the Army was sent off on the 7th of August, to go to Desert Storm. America didn't go to war on the 7th of August. The Army did, but America didn't. America went to war when all those moms and dads [and] kids down on the courthouse lawn, saying good-bye to their guardsmen [and] putting little yellow ribbons on the trees, went to war.

We know that. We cannot live with a fight in this family. Period. We've got to find a way to get around that. And it has got to be genuine and it has got to be sincere. Now, I remember the day that the secretary said, and he called in [Army Chief of Staff] Gen. [Dennis J.] Reimer, and he said, "I want you to fix this." Actually, it was really Rudy de Leon [undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness] that came to him the day before and said, "Mr. Secretary, you have got to do something about this." Then he called in Gen. Reimer, and he said to Gen. Reimer, "I'm not talking about a charm offensive. I'm talking about a real fix. A real fix is going to last, that's genuine and sincere and has roots. OK?"

So we set about trying to create some fundamental changes this year. We did a lot of different things. The secretary's letter outlined the four principles as a starting point for everybody. He directed, and we followed through. We brought the Guard leadership and the reserve component leadership into the budgeting process, at least at the OSD level, like we never had before. We asked Gen. Baca and [Maj.] Gen. [William] Navas [director, Army National Guard] and [Maj.] Gen. [Russell C.] Davis [vice chief, National Guard Bureau] to sit with us at the DRBs [Defense Resources Board]. And to sit with us at the MBI, the main budget issues session, so we could hear their views. And that's going to be a permanent feature.

The Army went and built its budget, because we told them to, and added \$2.5 billion over the FYDP [future years defense program] for the Guard. This is for equipment for the division redesign. When we had the main budget issues -- that's usually the court of appeals session, when each of the service chiefs come in and make a presentation to the secretary on things that weren't yet fixed in the budget process -- the first thing on Gen. Reimer's list was he needed another \$150 million of optempo [operations tempo] money for the Guard.

Now, I've built five budgets for the department and this was the first time that an Army Chief of Staff asked for more money for the Guard in an MBI. I mean, he's taking this, I think, very seriously.

The secretary directed, and he's absolutely right on this, (for us to look at) the Director of Military Support, our peacetime command center, that helps out coordinating activities when there are domestic emergencies. There was, I think, one Guardsman in the whole outfit. But, in reality, when the rubber meets the road, 98 percent of them are going to be guardsmen or reservists. So he said, "I want to have a general officer as the deputy director down there. I want half of the people in DOMS to be guardsmen and reservists. You have got to start making this genuine and real. We added \$250 million to the budget this year for the emergency response program that the secretary told us to develop -- I am going to talk about that in a few minutes -- involving protection against weapons of mass destruction.

And, as you know, the secretary said, "Enough of these two-colored card systems. That makes, for all practical purposes, an anointed class and an outcast. We're going to have one color card for our IDs."

So this is a genuine, sincere effort on our part to start. It isn't the end. We have got a long ways to go. We've got an awful long ways to go. But I think we're starting on the right path. The secretary is not going to let you guys kill each other. America can't take that. We do not have a future for either the Army or the Guard if we end up with everybody getting killed in the process. So we're going to have to make this work. And we're going to make it work as genuine partners. Not one better than the other, but as equals. Equals in the process of defending America. Defending America where it needs it most. That's at home.

I want to talk a minute about a very important program that the secretary started. That was putting a general officer down in DOMS. It's [Brig. Gen.] Roger Schultz, absolutely terrific, from Iowa. And that general, frankly, is doing more to save the Guard in the future than anybody else in this room.

I don't want to offend anybody when I say that, but I'll tell you why I think that's the case. He was given the mission not only to complement and outfit the DOMS and bring a reserve component presence into DOMS, but he was asked to head up the effort to design this new program for rapid response when we have a terrorist incident that involves chemical or biological weapons. You probably have seen the secretary talk about this in the last couple of months. A 5-pound bag, the size of a 5-pound sugar bag, 5-pound bag of anthrax, properly dispersed in this town, would kill half of the people in this city.

We think Saddam Hussein has got about 2,000 of those 5-pound bags. And he isn't the only guy in the world that knows how to make this stuff. You know, anybody that can brew ... beer can brew anthrax. We saw what happened with that fruitcake outfit over in Tokyo, that put the sarin in the subway system. I mean, we have got a lot of nuts in this world. And it is not that far off. That was a wake-up call for everybody in America, frankly. It was a wake-up call for us. We all riveted on that right quick and said what are we going to do about this?

Well, you have to have a comprehensive solution to a problem like this. You have got to redirect your intelligence capability so that you have a better way of looking out and finding who these bad guys are. You have to have a capability to go out and do something about it proactively, where you can. We have to, and I'm sorry to say it, we do have to inoculate our troops. At least if you have an antidote for something like anthrax, you give it to them. And we have to have, in this country, a capability to respond if something does happen.

Now, I have not talked to a major leader in the Congress who has not, some time in that conversation, said the only thing that makes sense is to have the Guard do that, they are all over. And I am telling you all, this is the defense mission of the next century -- homeland defense, fair and simple. It will take several different forms. Protection against terrorist attacks using chemical or biological weapons. Protection against attacks, cyber attacks, from people using computers to bring down air traffic control systems or utility systems or whatever. And homeland defense against world errant nations using a ballistic missile or two. So homeland defense is the mission of the next century. And the secretary believes, I certainly believe, that this ... could not be more important for the Guard to embrace as a mission.

Roger Schultz is designing exactly that program right now. And it is perfect. Well, along with these chaps, you know, it is not just him. But it is a terrific start. And it is not the end, by any means, but it is a start. We put in a quarter of a billion dollars for FYDP to do this.

There is not a more important mission. When we all step back, God, I hope it never happens. But if it does happen, and we step back, then you're able to put people on the scene who can do something about it. They're going to say, well, who were those smart people that thought ahead? And thought about that problem? And gave us a capability to deal with it?

It is the Gen. Bacas and the Gen. Navases, and the Gen. Davises, the [Maj.] Gen. [Ronald] Harrison [Florida adjutant general] of the world that are thinking about that, and are getting us ready for that. I

hope it never happens. I hope our capabilities to deal with it mean that we will never confront it. But I'm not going to bet on that. None of us can.

The Guard, as probably never before, comes, again, to the forefront in defending America. Not by itself, but as the leading partner in the most important agenda I think we have. That, we can prepare for now. We need your help on that.

Now, I know that there were some members of the Guard community who thought that this was a diversionary effort. You know, take your eye off the prize, which is holding onto eight divisions. Well, it is not. I agree with Bob Bell [of the National Security Council], let's set the division issue aside.

Let's think about what are the missions and the challenges that we've got in the next century. I personally believe that Americans are going to say, "What the heck are we doing with eight divisions that cannot deploy overseas, if they cannot defend America?" This is a central issue we have all got to come to grips with. And every one of you, please, you have got to get involved in this thing and you have to look into it. And it is these leaders that are sitting here in front of you, that are working on this on a daily basis.

Roger Schultz understands this. He has put together a great program. Have you had a chance to see his presentation? You all need to be aware, this is going to be our future. We have got to be working on this together. I need you to embrace it. I hope our preparations prevent it from ever happening, but we have got to get ready for that.

Let me conclude, and I really do want this -- I hope it is stimulating a discussion. I know that when Bob was here, he talked to you the other day, he energized you with the idea that we ought to have a new process. I am willing to be a partner in this reconciliation. We have got to have a reconciliation. American cannot afford to have this feud go on.

We're at a fork in the road. For the one road, God only knows where it goes if we keep this fight going. The other road, it is going to be bumpy. It is going to have rocks in it. I know that. We are all going to have to work and get out of the truck and roll a few rocks out of the way every now and then. But the other road is the one we have got to take. We are just going to have to do that. And I'm willing to be a partner. I'm willing to sit in the back of that truck with you and get out and roll a log off the road or a stone out of the way. We are going to have to do this. The secretary wants us to make this work. We have to. We have to make it work because America needs this thing to work.

This country is 220 years old, give or take. The Guard is 361 years old. You have adapted countless times to changing circumstances. And we are in the middle of that right now. These are changing and evolving circumstances. America cannot live without its Guard. Period. And I would argue the Guard really needs the Army as its active partner. Pure and simple. We're going to make this thing work as we think about this very challenging future. It is going to depend on leaders who have imagination and creativity, daring and a willingness to cooperate. And, frankly, you are those leaders, and America is counting on you.

Thank you very much.

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